



## **PATIENT INFORMATION REGARDING PREGABALIN AND GABAPENTIN FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT**

Pregabalin or gabapentin belong to a group of medicines called anticonvulsants which are also used to treat epilepsy. They can also be prescribed for a number of other conditions including generalised anxiety disorder and pain that happens due to nerve damage.

You may notice that information from the manufacturer may not mention your type of pain.

Pregabalin and gabapentin work by changing the way that nerves send messages to your brain. If the messages are reduced, then the pain will be reduced.

### **Starting pregabalin or gabapentin for pain**

- These medicines do not always help with pain so at the start you will be given them for a test period.
- Usually you will start at a low dose and increase gradually. The healthcare professional prescribing this for you will tell you how to do this.
- A follow-up appointment should be made to review how well the medicine is working for you. It is important to check if it is giving you any benefit and also if it is causing any side effects.
- The possible benefits are not just less pain, but also an improvement in other things like sleep and being able to do more without pain interfering
- If you do not notice any improvement in your symptoms after taking one of these medicines at the best dose for approximately 6-8 weeks, then the medication will be gradually reduced and stopped.
- **These medicines should not be stopped suddenly because a withdrawal reaction may happen.** The symptoms of withdrawal include agitation, restlessness, anxiety, nausea, sweating or flu-like symptoms
- If the medicine is helpful, then it will be continued and reviewed yearly to make sure it is still effective and not causing any harm

### **DRIVING**

**This medication can cause drowsiness, dizziness and impaired cognitive function (thinking and judgement) it may affect your ability to drive safely.**

**Please see the DVLA website for information on driving when taking prescription medicines such as benzodiazepines. [Drugs and driving: the law - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)**

### **PREGNANCY**

**Pregabalin may slightly increase the risk of major congenital malformations if used in pregnancy. Effective contraception should be used during treatment and avoid use in pregnancy should be discussed with the GP. For further information see the following link from the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) Pregabalin and risks in pregnancy patient leaflet [Pregabalin-PSL-April\\_2022\\_V2.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)**

### **ALCOHOL**

**Alcohol increases the sedative (sleepy) effects with opioid medication, it is best not to drink alcohol when you start taking opioid medication. (2)**

If you have any further questions regarding this information including the ongoing management of your condition, then please arrange a routine appointment to discuss further with your prescriber.

If you are taking this medication regularly and you wish to reduce or stop it, please contact your GP practice to arrange a routine appointment with your prescriber to discuss further. **Please do not stop your medication suddenly as this may make you feel unwell.**



Gabapentin and pregabalin are classed as controlled medicines. Strict legal controls are needed for certain medicines. This is because they may cause serious problems like dependence ('addiction') and harm if they are not used properly. Sometimes people use these medicines illegally for reasons that are not medical (drug misuse), and so extra safety measures are needed to make sure they are prescribed, supplied, used and stored safely and legally. The person prescribing the medicine has the responsibility to make sure the medicine is being used safely and correctly and not putting anyone at risk of harm.

### **ADDICTION**

**If you believe you are addicted to gabapentin or pregabalin medication, then please arrange an appointment with the GP or pharmacist at the surgery to discuss further. We would not advise stopping this medication abruptly.**

**Further information can also be found here at Forward Leeds.**

**<https://www.forwardleeds.co.uk/>**

### **MISUSE OF MEDICATION**

**Pregabalin and gabapentin have the potential for misuse. They may cause physical dependence, such as insomnia, weight gain, mood swings, double vision, nausea and vomiting. If there any concerns that this may be happening for you, then you will be advised to arrange an appointment with a GP or pharmacist before any further medication is prescribed.**

### **LOST PRESCRIPTIONS WILL NOT BE REPLACED**

**If you take higher doses than prescribed and run out of medication before the next prescription is due, you will NOT be prescribed extra tablets. A routine appointment to discuss this further with a clinician is advised.**

**These medicines are controlled drugs and will not be prescribed early.**

**PRESCRIPTIONS REQUESTED EARLY FOR TRAVEL WILL REQUIRE PROOF OF TRAVEL**

### **Useful Information**

pregabalin pil

<https://www.choiceandmedication.org/leedsandyorkpft/generate/pillpregabalinuk.pdf>

link to choice and medication sight for all leaflets

<https://www.choiceandmedication.org/leedsandyorkpft/printable-leaflets/>

### **References**

- (1) Patient, neuropathic pain, author Dr Colin Tidy, reviewed by Dr Laurence Knott, last edited 16/10/20, online, accessed 14/04/22 <https://patient.info/brain-nerves/neuropathic-pain?msclkid=45442eecbbd711ecbc954fb7754c4795#nav-6>
- (2) Faculty of pain medicine from the royal college of anaesthetists, Version 3.1 2017, online, accessed 1/2/21.

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<b>Written by:</b>	Hannah Black, Senior Clinical Pharmacist
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<b>To be reviewed by:</b>	Leeds ICB Medicines Optimisation Team

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